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MEAD—MEADOW, SHADE—SHADOW, A STUDY IN ANALOGY

It is usual to assume that these words are inflectional doublets, the first of each pair from a nominative, the second from an accusative or oblique case form. So Skeat, Kluge, Jespersen (*Progress in Language* p. 180), Wyld (*Short History of English* § 316), the *New Eng. Dict.* However, that both nominative and accusative when differing from each other should be finally preserved in a single dialect is unusual, if not unknown. Where the nominative and accusative differ in nouns the accusative is alone regularly preserved by frequency of usage.¹ Thus we may explain *narrow(s)* 'a strait of water,' *shadow*, *sinew*, *meadow*, and the rare *leasow* 'pasture' as from the Anglian *wā*-stem accusatives *nearwe*, *scædwe* (WS. *sceadwe*), *sinwe*, *mēdwe* (WS. *mædwe*), *lēswe* (WS. *læswe*). And these are the only *wā*-stems not ending in a vowel or *w* which have come down to the modern standard speech. Similarly, the parallel neuter *wo*-stems *bale*, *cud* (*quid*), *smear*, *tar*, are as regularly developed from the accusative (nominative) without an OE. *-we* ending, and seem to be the only examples of this kind now preserved.²

Now it is unnecessary to assume any radical departure from the ordinary workings of analogy in the case of the words we are considering. The long *wā*-stem which gives us *mead-meadow* had already in Old English a double inflection, as it continued to follow *wā*-stems with singular oblique cases in *-we*, or went over to the *ā*-stems with an oblique case ending in *-e*. The former gave ME. *medwe* (*medewe*, *medew*, *medow*), the latter ME. *mēde* (*mēde*), each based on the accusative or oblique case form. The change of

¹ I say accusative specifically, because without question in the majority of nouns the accusative form is more frequently used than any other. In English the dative perhaps assisted sometimes, but the history of the words in this article shows that the dative and genitive rarely, if ever, withstood the analogy of the accusative case.

² Stems ending in a vowel or *w* show coalescence of the stem and ending, so that a MnE. syllabic *-ow* (*ew*) ending was impossible. Of such *wā* stems are *claw*, archaic *rue* sb., *stow* 'a place' in place-names like *Cheapstow*. Similar neuter *wo*-stems are *ankle*, *dew*, *low* (of a cow), *snow*, *tree*.

vowel from close to open *ē*, perhaps a Southernism or more likely due to the preceding low-pitched *m*, need not concern us here. The two ME. words have come down regularly as *mead*, *meadow*, probably both preserved by slight differentiation in use. For example, even in Middle English, *mead* is rather the poetic and literary form, — tho it exists also in compounds as *Runnymed*, — and *meadow* the common every-day variety. In the same way *leasow* ‘pasture’ and the rarer *lease* in the same sense are to be explained.

That the usual etymology of these words can not be correct should be clear from the Middle English forms. Thus if MnE. *mead*, *lease* came from the OE. nominatives they should have given ME. *mēd*, *lēs*, or with open vowel, *mēd*, *lēs*. They appear regularly as ME. *mēde*, *lēse* (*mēde*, *lēse*), in both nominative-accusative and dative so far as used, just as we should expect if they had sprung from the OE. *ā*-stem accusative or oblique case in *-e*. Chaucer has the ns. *mēde* in *Troil.* II, 53 and *C. T. Prol.* 89, the as. *mēde* in *R of R.* 132, and the ds. *mēde* in seven other cases cited in Skeat’s glossary not counting *R of R.* 1432. He also has ns. *medewe* in *R of R.* 128, and ds. *medew* in *LGW(B)* 210, (A) 104. That is the two words were clearly distinct in Middle English declensional forms, and should be separately glossed in Middle English dictionaries just as much as OE. *scead* and *sceadu* which are from a single Teutonic root. So also Chaucer has ds. *lēse* in *HF.* 1768 and *Troil.* II, 752, when if the usual idea of the etymology is correct he should have used *leswe* (*lesow*). The latter form he does not seem to employ at all.³

Shade and *shadow* have a somewhat similar and a somewhat different history. A single word of the Teutonic *u*-stems, Gothic *skadus* ‘shade, shadow,’ had early become differentiated into two Old English words. An Anglian neuter *scæd* (WS. *scead*) had entirely lost connection with the masculine *u*-stems, as had *frið* ‘peace’ and *lið* ‘joint, limb’ except in compounds, while a form

³ As to poetic usage, ME. *mēde* and MnE. *mead* lend themselves so readily to rime that we should expect them to be much used, while ME. *medwe* (*medewe*, *medew*, *medow*), MnE. *meadow* could not be easily managed in rime position. Chaucer, according to the Skeat glossary, has *mēde* in rime ten times, not including *R. of R.* 1432, while neither of the examples of *medewe* (*medew*) is at the end of the line. Gower uses only *medwe*, according to Macaulay’s glossary, ns. *medwe* in *Conf. Amant.* v, 4151, apl. *medwes* v, 5964, neither example in rime.

of the root with final *u*, Anglian *scædu*, WS. *sceadu*, had associated itself with the feminine *wā*-stems. That the two Old English words existed side by side must have been due to a slight differentiation in meaning or use, as today between *shade* 'shelter, protection' and *shadow* 'dark spot due to cutting off of light, immaterial thing.'

Anglian *scædu*, acc. *scædwe*, gave ME. *schadwe* (*schadewe*, *schadowe*) through the regular analogical displacement of the nominative by the more frequently used accusative. At the same time WS. *sceadu* sometimes has oblique case forms in *-e*, showing that it sometimes went over to the simple *ā*-stems as OE. *mēd* (*māed*) had gone over to the *wā*-stems. Such an inflectional form would have given ME. *schade*, and may have had some influence in the development of MnE. *shade*. On the other hand it can be shown to be more likely a development of Anglian *scæd*, altho one new effect of analogical influence enters as we shall see.

Anglian *scæd* regularly became ME. *schad*. It would naturally have remained among nouns with short stem vowel followed by a single consonant and without final unstressed *e*, since its accusative and nominative agreed. But now a new influence entered. The stem vowel of such nouns, when capable of lengthening in an open syllable, became long during Middle English in the genitive and dative singular and in the plural. There were thus in the same inflection two forms of such a noun, an accusative-nominative singular with short vowel in a closed syllable, a genitive and dative, as well as a plural of all cases, with long vowel in an open syllable. Such double forms within the declension were unusual and sure to suffer regularization by analogy. Either stem might have been eliminated and was in different examples, but it is easy to show that more commonly the stem with long vowel in open syllable prevailed, and the singular accusative-nominative conformed by assuming the long vowel and final *e*. Thus ME. *schad* would have become *schāde* (*shāde*) and probably did become MnE. *shade*.⁴

⁴ The change applies only to Old English short masculine and neuter *o*-stems, since all others had a final unstressed *e* in Middle English by the phonetic change of unstressed *a*, *o*, *u*, to *e*. Nouns which in Middle English assumed final unstressed *e* from their accusatives, by the regular analogical principle, of course do not belong here. On the other hand a considerable number of borrowed words suffered the same change.

Old English neuters which lengthened their stem vowel and assumed final unstressed *-e* like Anglian *scæd* are:

(*ge*)*bed*, ME. *bēde*, MnE. *bead* 'prayer, ornament'; *blæd*, ME. *blāde* 'blade (of grass)'; (*ge*)*bod*, ME. *bōde* 'bode, warning'; *bred*, ME. *brēde*, early MnE. *breade* 'breadth' used by J. Heywood in 1560; *col*, ME. *cōle* 'coal'; *dæl*, ME. *dāle* 'dale'; *dor*, ME. *dōre* 'door'; (*in*)*fær*, ME. *infāre* 'infare, housewarming'; Ang. *ȝæt* (WS. *ȝeat*), ME. *yāte* (and *gāte* by Scandinavian influence) *gate*'; Ang. *ȝoc* (WS. *ȝeoc*), ME. *ȝōke* (*yōke*) 'yoke'; *gor*, ME. *gōre* 'dirt, dung, gore'; *græf*, ME. *grāve* 'grave, burial place'; *grot*, ME. *grōte* 'particle, groat (groats)'; *hol*, ME. *hōle* 'hole'; *hop*, ME. *hōpe* 'sloping hollow, hope' in place-names like *Stanhope*; *pos*, ME. *pōse* MnE. *pose* 'cough' reported by the *NED* from Phillips (1706); *slæd*, ME. *slāde* 'valley, slade' still used by Drayton; *sol*, ME. *sōle*, MnE. *sole* (*soal*) 'muddy place, mire,' now perhaps only a Kenticism; *staeð*, ME. *stāthe* 'bank, shore,' early MnE. *stathe* (1515), later *staithe* (*staithe*), local in England. There were besides in Middle English *lōre* 'loss,' OE. *lor*; *sāle* 'hall,' OE. *sæl*, still used by Malory; *wāde* 'ford, shallow place' OE. *wæd*. To these must probably be added *beach*, OE. *bæc*, and perhaps *slope*, ME. *a slōpe*, OE. *slop* 'sliding.'

Of the fewer Old English masculines, those which lengthened their stem vowel and assumed final unstressed *e* in a similar manner are:

hwæl, ME. *whāle* 'whale'; *stæf*, ME. *stāve* 'stave'; *stær*, ME. *stāre* 'starling, stare.'

Borrowed words were also affected, as the Scandinavian neuters *star*, ME. *stāre* 'coarse grain'; *val*, ME. *wāle*, MnE. dialectal *wale* 'choice, option.' Considerably more numerous are the Old French words:

as, ME. *āce* 'ace'; *bas* m., ME. *bāse* 'foundation, base'; *cap*, ME. *cāpe* 'headland, cape'; *cas*, ME. *cāse* 'event, case'; *cas* (*casse*) f., ME. *cāse* 'receptacle, case'; *clos*, ME. *clōse* 'enclosed space, close'; *debat*, ME. *debāte* 'strife, debate'; *dol*, ME. *dōle* 'artifice,' Scotch law *dole* 'malice'; *dol*, ME. *dōle* 'grief, dole'; *estat*, ME. *estāte* 'estate'; *lac*, ME. *lāke* 'lake'; *las*, ME. *lāce* 'cord, lace'; *pas*, ME. *pāce* 'step, pace'; *palat*, ME. *palāte* 'palate'; *pal*, ME. *pale* 'stake'; *prelat*, ME. *prelāte* 'prelate';

senat, ME. *senāte* 'senate'; (*e*)*sclat*, ME. *slāte*, (*sclāte*) 'thin flat stone, slate'; *solas*, ME. *solāce* 'solace'; (*e*)*stat*, ME. *stāte* 'condition, state'; *val*, ME. *vāle* 'valley, vale.'⁵

It was noted that this change of stem vowel belongs only to vowels capable of lengthening in an open syllable. The vowels *i* and *u* did not so lengthen it is usually believed, and this seems to be fully borne out by words of the Old English groups we are considering. Thus of Old English neuters with *i*—there were no masculines—all retain the short vowel in their modern standard forms, as *cliff*, *lid* (OE. *hlid*), *limb* (OE. *lim*), *lith* 'joint, limb,' *ship*, *tin*, *twig*, *writ*. In Middle English there were besides *lith* 'slope' (OE. *hlīð*), *lith* 'help, company' (Scand. *lið*), and *nip* 'darkness' (OE. *genip*). Old French words with *i* final or before a single consonant belong to a different class since, probably owing to the quality of the *i*, they early associated themselves with words having long *i*. Compare *cry* sb. (OF. *cri*), *delight* (OF. *delit*), *exile* (OF. *exil*), *strife* (OF. *estrif*), and *respite* (OF. *respit*) which once had a long vowel. There seem to have been no Old English words with the stem vowel *u*.⁶

⁵ In Middle English double forms naturally remain for a time, the older short form of the stem appearing beside that with the long vowel. For example Chaucer rimes *grot* 'groat' which now remains only in the long form, with *lot*, OE. *hlot*, 'portion,' which has remained short. So the short *lock*, *sod*, *swath* had Middle English long forms as *lōke*, *sōde*, *swāthe*. Both long and short forms have sometimes been retained in different meaning or use. Thus beside the independent *cot*, OE. *cot*, is *-cote* in *dovecote*, tho in the latter case an OE. *cote* wf. may have had influence. Compare also *staff* and *stave* from OE. *stæf*, and *slate*, *slat* from OF. (*e*)*sclat* (**slat*).

In *case* 'receptacle' above the development implies a form **cas* as if masculine, rather than *casse* f. Chaucer has this form in at least two places, LGW. 982 riming with *Eneas*, and C. A. T. 2558 riming with *cas* 'event.' However this form arose, it should be mentioned in the etymologies instead of the OF. *casse* only.

⁶ These examples bear strongly upon Luick's contention for lengthening of *i* and *u* in open syllables (*Studien zur engl. Lautgeschichte*, 1903, Wyld, *Short History of English*, § 174). If such lengthening did occur, when not preceded by change of *i*, *u* to *e*, *o*, it should have affected the oblique cases of some of these words and some of them would certainly have been preserved in their long forms. That *i*, *u* did become *e*, *o* in a few cases, probably under the influence of neighboring sounds, is certainly true. For example, of these words ME. *clif* sometimes became *clef*. The latter then

Words which regularized the Middle English difference in stem vowel by preserving the short form are, as already indicated, fewer in number. Of Old English neuters—I need give only the modern form as a rule—are:

back sb., *bath*, *brass*, *broth*, *chaff*, *cot*, *fat* ‘vessel’ displaced by the Southern *vat*, *glass*, *God*, *grass*, *lock*, *sap*, *sod* (OE. *gesod*), *span*, *swath*, *thatch*. *Cart*, if from OE. *cræt*, early left the group by metathesis of *r*.

Old English masculines are:

brock ‘badger,’ *path*, *stink* sb., *staff* beside *stave* as above.

Perhaps one reason for the preservation of these short vowel forms is their phonetic character in other respects. All but *God*, *sod*, *span* have final voiceless consonants, most of which sometimes caused shortening even of long vowels.

The change of a short-stemmed accusative-nominative by analogy of the long stem form is partly, it will be clear, a change of the singular by analogy of the plural. Such a change also took place in some adjectives and in the past tenses of some verbs. Examples of Old English adjectives are:

bær, ME. *bāre* ‘bare’; *læt*, ME. *lāte* ‘slow, late’; *tam*(*tom*), ME. *tāme* ‘tame’; (*ge*)*wær*, ME. *iwāre*, *awāre* ‘aware.’

Scandinavian are:

samr, ME. *sāme* ‘same’; *starr*, ME. *stāre* ‘stiff, weary.’

Old French adjectives suffering the same change include:

bas, ME. *bāse* ‘low, base’; *clos*, ME. *clōse* ‘shut in, close’; *mal*, ME. *māle* ‘evil’; *mat*, ME. *māte* ‘dejected, weary’; *saf*, ME. *sāfe*, NF. *saf* beside OF. *sauf* ‘safe’; *sol*, ME. *sōle* ‘solitary.’

In the past tense of some strong verbs also the analogical play was between plural and singular forms. Take for example the verb *come* of the fourth gradation series with its exceptionally irregular past forms in Old English. By Middle English times, besides those from OE. *cōm*—*cōmon*, such forms as *cam*—*camen* had come into existence by analogy of other pasts of the same series, as late OE.

suffered the analogical change I have explained along with other *e* words, as shown by Chaucer’s *clēves* or *clives* (LGW. 1470), tho he has also *clif* (LGW. 1497), *cliffes* (*B* of *D*. 161).

nam—*namon*. The *a* of the plural was itself by earlier analogy of the singular, and at first short since it never became ME. \bar{q} as an OE. \bar{a} would have done. In the plural open syllable this *a* then became long in Middle English. Similarly in the fifth gradation series ME. \mathfrak{zaf} resulted in an analogical plural *zaven*, which then became *zāven* by lengthening of the vowel in the open syllable. Later, by analogy of the plural form, the singular vowel became long and a final unstressed *e* was assumed.

Such analogical influence of plural upon singular accounts for the late Middle English pasts of gradation classes four and five—*bare*, *brake*, *came*, *gat(e)*, *gave*, *spake*, *stale* ‘stole,’ *stake* ‘stuck,’ *sate*, *tare* ‘tore,’ *trade* ‘trod.’ By analogy of these words *swear* of the sixth gradation class also took a past tense *sware*; *strike* of the first a past *strake* (unless this is possibly a Northern form); and the weak verb *wear* a strong past *ware*. All these forms are in Malory (Baldwin’s *Inflections and Syntax of the Morte D’Arthur* § 161). Early Modern English, as shown by Shakespeare or the King James version of the Bible, still sometimes used *bade*, *bare*, *brake*, *came*, *gave*, *sate*, *spake*, *sware*, *ware*, and *drave* perhaps by a new analogy of such forms. Shortening before a dental had reduced *gate* to *gat*, as often *sate* to *sat*. Of these, as we know, *came* and *gave* have remained standard English, while *sate* persisted in poetry and sometimes in prose to a late period.

I have been at some pains to explain in detail this influence of analogy, both because it is somewhat exceptional, and because it has not been sufficiently recognized. That it has not been properly recognized is clear from the treatment of various words in the *New Eng. Dict.* For *bead* ‘prayer’ a possible *bedu*, *bed* f. is set up. Under *blade* is the comment “appears derived from oblique cases and plural.” No explanation is given under *bode*, *coal*, *dale*. *Door* is said to be a mixture of OE. *duru* and *dor*.⁷ Of *hole* it is said,

⁷ MnE. *door* pronounced *dōr* would be amply accounted for by the principle explained in this paper. The peculiarity is the early modern spelling *door*, in which however *oo* may mean no more than in *floor*, OE. *flōr*. In both words influence of *r* is to be taken into account, as well as the double forms existing today in such words as *boor*, *moor*, *poor* on the one side, and such as *door*, *floor*, *swore*, *whore*, dialectal *poor* pronounced *pōr*, *board*, *hoard* and others. Compare also the double pronunciation of the proper name *More*, *Moore*.

"may be < holh," a form which regularly accounts for the substantive, perhaps also the adjective, *hollow*. Of *mead* the NED says:

By phonetic law the *w* was dropped in the nom. sing. of OE., and retained in the other forms. Although the regular inflection is the more common, the oblique cases and plural are sometimes found assimilated to the nom. sing., as gen. and dat. *mæde* (dat. also *mēda* as from a *u*-stem), pl. *māda*.

Of *shade* the explanation is:

ME. *schade* rep. OE. *sceadu* str. fem. (oblique cases *sceadwe* also irreg. *sceade*) and the by form *scead* neut. (dat. sing. *sceade*, pl. *sceadu*). The flexional form *sceadwe* is represented by *shadow* sb.⁸

The less common character of this particular analogical influence is also noteworthy. As a rule the singular form is more stable than the plural, because in most cases more commonly used. Witness the preservation of the singular only in the indefinite-interrogative *who*, the Old English relative particle *þe*, the Middle English article *the* and the relative *that*. Or take the preservation into Middle English of three forms of the singular in nouns as compared with one form of the plural, and the retention of two of those singular forms to modern times. Again only the present indicative singular retains more than one personal form in verbs, and gradation verbs preserve in the past tense the old singular rather than the plural in almost the proportion of two to one. It is the more important, therefore, that examples in which the plural had its influence should be more carefully explained.

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⁸I must note throughout this explanation the citation of WS. forms exclusively, as so often in our English etymologies, altho the differences in Anglican English from which most of our standard forms must have come are now fairly clear.